

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims replaces all previous versions, and listings, of the claims.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A modular animal enclosure, comprising:
a housing comprising a base portion and a top portion attached to the base portion to form
a sheltered interior, the housing including a door aperture to permit ingress of an
animal into said interior and an upwardly extending flange which defines a
climate conditioning aperture to accommodate a flow of atmospheric air between
the interior and an external environment; and
a climate conditioning unit configured to be contactingly supported on a top surface of
the housing surrounding the upwardly extending flange to facilitate said flow of
atmospheric air through the climate conditioning aperture, and further configured
to be subsequently removed from the housing by an upwardly directed retraction
of said unit from about said flange, for removable attachment to the housing
adjacent the climate conditioning aperture, the climate conditioning unit
contactingly supported by a top surface of the housing at a position a selected
distance away from the climate conditioning aperture so as to form a gap
therebetween, the climate conditioning unit facilitating said flow of atmospheric
air through the gap and through the climate conditioning aperture to the interior,
and
a fastener inserted through a flange to attach the climate conditioning unit to the housing.

2. (Previously presented) The animal enclosure of claim 1, wherein the climate conditioning unit comprises a cover assembly comprising a plate member having a cross-sectional area greater than the cross-sectional area of the climate conditioning aperture, wherein the plate member is supported by the top surface of the housing at least at one location adjacent to, and outside of, the climate conditioning aperture.

3. (Currently amended) The animal enclosure of claim 1, further comprising a fastener which fastens the climate conditioning unit to the top surface of the housing so that the upwardly extending flange is disposed between the climate conditioning unit and the climate conditioning aperture. 2, wherein the flange projects from the plate member adjacent the top surface of the housing.

4. (Currently amended) The animal enclosure of claim 3, wherein an insertion depth of the fastener can be slidingly adjusted to alter a cross-sectional thickness of the a gap between the cover assembly and the climate conditioning aperture top cover.

5. (Original) The animal enclosure of claim 1, wherein the climate conditioning unit comprises a cooled air unit which supplies cooled air to the interior.

6. (Original) The animal enclosure of claim 1, wherein the climate conditioning unit comprises a fan unit which directs increased velocity ambient air through the climate conditioning aperture.

7. (Original) The animal enclosure of claim 1, wherein the climate conditioning unit comprises a heating unit which supplies heated air to the interior.

8. (Original) The animal enclosure of claim 1, wherein the climate conditioning unit comprises a radiant heat source which directs radiant heat into the interior.

9. (Original) The animal enclosure of claim 1, wherein the climate conditioning unit extends through the climate conditioning aperture and into the housing interior.

Claim 10 (Cancelled)

11. (Original) The animal enclosure of claim 1, wherein the climate conditioning aperture is substantially rectangular in cross-sectional extent.

12. (Original) The animal enclosure of claim 11, wherein the rectangular cross-sectional extent has a minimum dimension of at least four inches.

13. (Original) The animal enclosure of claim 1, wherein the top portion is sized to nest within the base portion when the top portion is inverted.

Claim 14 (Cancelled)

15. (Original) The animal enclosure of claim 1, wherein the climate conditioning aperture is centered in the top portion over the sheltered interior of the housing.

16. (Original) The animal enclosure of claim 1, further comprising a sensor which detects an ambient condition, and wherein the climate conditioning unit operates in response to said detected ambient condition.

17. (Original) The animal enclosure of claim 1, further comprising an animal proximity sensor which detects the presence of the animal within the interior, and wherein the climate conditioning unit operates in response to said detected presence of the animal.

18. (Currently amended) A modular animal enclosure, comprising:
a housing comprising a base portion and a top portion removably attached to the base portion to form a sheltered interior, the housing including a door aperture to permit ingress of an animal into said interior and an upwardly extending flange which defines a climate conditioning aperture to accommodate a flow of atmospheric air between the interior and an external environment; and
a climate conditioning unit which facilitates said flow of atmospheric air through the climate conditioning aperture, said unit comprising an upwardly extending support portion removeably supportable by a top surface of the housing adjacent in non-contacting relation to the upwardly extending flange opposite the climate conditioning aperture and a cover portion which spans the climate conditioning

aperture, said unit further configured to be subsequently removed through
upwardly directed retraction of said unit from about said flange.
~~first means supported by a top surface of the housing for facilitating said flow of~~
~~atmospheric air through the climate conditioning aperture.~~

19. (Currently amended) The modular animal enclosure of claim 18, further comprising second means for allowing pivotal movement of the top portion with respect to the base portion in alternate, opposing first and second directions, and for impeding initiation of said pivotal movement in said opposing first and second directions.

20. (Original) The modular animal enclosure of claim 18, further comprising means for sensing the presence of the animal within the interior, and wherein the facilitating means is operationally responsive to the sensing means.

21. (Original) The modular animal enclosure of claim 18, further comprising means for detecting an ambient condition, and wherein the facilitating means is operationally responsive to the detecting means.

22. (Previously presented) A modular animal enclosure comprising a base portion and a top portion attached to the base portion to form a housing with a sheltered interior and a door aperture to permit ingress of an animal into said interior, wherein the top portion is configured to be hinged to the base portion to facilitate access to the interior by pivotal movement of the top portion with respect to the base portion in a first direction by at least one hinge pin which

projects through respective first hinge apertures in the base portion and in the top portion on a first side of the housing, wherein the base portion and top portion further comprise respective second hinge apertures on a second side of the housing opposite the first side so that the hinge pin can be alternately inserted through the second hinge apertures to facilitate access to the interior by pivotal movement of the top portion with respect to the base portion in a second direction, and wherein the top portion and base portions each further comprise respective flanges which form first and second interference latches on the respective first and second sides of the housing so that the first interference latch impedes initiation of said rotation in the second direction and so that the second interference latch impedes initiation of said rotation in the first direction.

23. (Original) The animal enclosure of claim 22, wherein the top portion is sized to nest within the base portion when the top portion is inverted.

Claim 24 (Cancelled)

25. (Currently amended) A modular animal enclosure, comprising:
a housing comprising a base portion and a top portion removably attached to the base portion to form a sheltered interior, the housing including a door aperture to permit ingress of an animal into said interior and an upwardly extending flange which defines a climate conditioning aperture to accommodate a flow of atmospheric air between the interior and an external environment;

a climate conditioning unit configured to be contactingly supported on a top surface of the housing surrounding the upwardly extending flange to facilitate said flow of atmospheric air through the climate conditioning aperture; and
~~first means supported on a top surface of said housing for facilitating said flow of atmospheric air through the climate conditioning aperture; and~~
second means for allowing pivotal movement of the top portion with respect to the base portion in alternate, opposing first and second directions, and for impeding initiation of said pivotal movement in said opposing first and second directions.

26. (Previously presented) The animal enclosure of claim 1, wherein the fastener extends into a non-through hole in the housing.

27. (Previously presented) The animal enclosure of claim 1, wherein the climate conditioning unit is characterized as a first climate conditioning unit, and wherein the animal enclosure further comprises a second climate conditioning unit configured for removable attachment to the housing adjacent the climate conditioning aperture in lieu of the first climate conditioning unit so that the second climate conditioning unit is contactingly supported by the top surface of the housing at a position a selected distance away from the climate conditioning aperture so as to form a gap therebetween, the second climate conditioning unit facilitating said flow of atmospheric air through the gap and through the climate conditioning aperture to the interior.

28. (Previously presented) The animal enclosure of claim 27, wherein the first climate conditioning unit comprises a radiant heat source and wherein the second climate conditioning unit does not comprise a radiant heat source.

29. (Currently amended) A modular animal enclosure, comprising:
a housing comprising a base portion and a top portion attached to the base portion to form a sheltered interior, the housing including a door aperture to permit ingress of an animal into said interior and an upwardly extending flange which defines a climate conditioning aperture to accommodate a flow of atmospheric air between the interior and an external environment; and
first and second climate conditioning units alternately removeably attachable to the housing, each said unit configured to respectively span the climate conditioning aperture in turn while being supported on a top surface of the housing surrounding the upwardly extending flange at a position a selected distance away from the climate conditioning aperture to respectively facilitate said flow of atmospheric air through the climate conditioning aperture to the interior, wherein the first climate conditioning unit is characterized as a heating unit to heat the interior, and wherein the second climate conditioning unit is characterized as a cooling unit to cool the interior, and wherein the first climate conditioning unit has a portion thereof that extends downwardly through the climate conditioning aperture when supported by said top surface, said portion retracted upwardly back through the climate conditioning aperture when the first climate conditioning unit is removed from the housing.

30. (Previously presented) The animal enclosure of claim 29, further comprising a fastener configured to extend through a flange to secure the first climate conditioning unit to the housing, the fastener further configured to alternatively extend through a flange to secure the second climate conditioning unit to the housing.

31. (Previously presented) A modular animal enclosure comprising:
a base portion comprising first and second pin apertures and first and second flange portions respectively adjacent the first and second pin apertures;
a top portion configured to mate with the base portion to form a housing with a sheltered interior and a door aperture to permit ingress of an animal into said interior, the top portion comprising third and fourth pin apertures and third and fourth flange portions respectively adjacent the third and fourth pin apertures; and
a hinge pin configured for insertion through the respective first and third apertures to facilitate rotational movement of the top portion with respect to the base portion in a first direction to facilitate access to the interior, the hinge pin further configured for alternative insertion through the respective second and fourth apertures to facilitate rotational movement of the top portion with respect to the base portion in a second direction opposite the first direction to facilitate access to the interior, wherein the second and fourth flange portions form an interference latch to impede initiation of said rotation in the first direction when the hinge pin is inserted through the first and third pin apertures, and wherein the first and third flange portions form an interference latch to impede initiation of said rotation in

the second direction when the hinge pin is inserted through the second and fourth pin apertures.

32. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 31, wherein the first and second flange portions extend outwardly in a direction away from the interior, and wherein the third and fourth flange portions are each characterized as a retention tab which extends inwardly in a direction toward the interior, each retention tab configured to extend below the respective first and second flange portion.

33. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 31, wherein upon said rotational movement of the top portion with respect to the bottom portion in the first direction, the fourth flange portion rotates down and away in a clearing relation from the second flange portion so that said rotational movement of the top portion in the first direction is not impeded by said fourth flange portion, and wherein upon said rotational movement of the top portion with respect to the bottom portion in the second direction, the third portion rotates down and away in a clearing relation from the first flange portion so that said rotational movement of the top portion in the second direction is not impeded by said third flange portion.